

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 117

By Cooper B

A RESOLUTION to urge increased funding for the development and expansion of dropout prevention programs in Tennessee.

WHEREAS, Tennessee, like every state in the nation, is faced with meeting the requirements established by the Federal No Child Left Behind act; and

WHEREAS, an integral provision of No Child Left Behind requires every state to reach the goal of a 100% high school graduation rate, which would, academically, leave no child behind; and

WHEREAS, while still in double digits, the number of students in Tennessee who dropout of school before graduation has decreased incrementally from 13.9% in 2001 to a cohort rate of 10% for 2003, according to the 2003 Report Card of the Tennessee Department of Education; and

WHEREAS, preventing students from leaving school before graduation benefits society in a number of ways. A high school graduate earns approximately \$9,425 more per year than a non-graduate. Of the inmates in the state prisons across this nation, approximately 75% are high school dropouts; and

WHEREAS, for Tennessee to address this problem state government must adequately assist every school system. A successful dropout prevention effort requires high quality, well-sustained programs that focus on attendance, truancy, and support for student engagement; and

WHEREAS, it is imperative to the success of this State's children, and hence its

economy and the total welfare of its people, that the individual and societal factors contributing to our public schools' exceptionally high dropout rate be addressed by this General Assembly to conquer this perplexing problem; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that this General Assembly expresses its unwavering support for an increase in funding for local school systems to be utilized for the development and implementation of dropout prevention programs in conjunction with the Department of Education and the State Board of Education.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we hereby urge and encourage the Governor to include such an earmarked appropriation within the administration's general appropriations act for fiscal year 2005-2006.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a certified copy of this resolution be transmitted to the Honorable Phil Bredesen, Governor of Tennessee, and to the Commissioners of the Department of Finance and Administration and the Department of Education.